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Testimony re. HB 6517, *AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE TO ANALYZE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LAWS GOVERNING DYSLEXIA INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING.*

I am board certified as both a school psychologist and a clinical neuropsychologist, with a subspecialty in pediatric neuropsychology. I am in private practice in Old Saybrook, Connecticut, and I work with children who have a wide range of educational, social, and emotional difficulties. Many of these children have reading disabilities, including dyslexia.

Dyslexia is a term used to describe students who display a particular pattern of reading impairment (Shaywitz, 2005). It is not the only type of reading disability, and the term should not be used to classify all students with reading problems (Cutting, et. al., 2013). Students with reading disabilities, including dyslexia, require specialized instruction in order to make adequate educational gains.

The state has passed legislation requiring that dyslexia, when present, must be specifically identified during the process of special education identification and eligibility Public Act 14-39. Basic requirements for the certification and training needs of educational professionals in Connecticut who work with students who have dyslexia, have also been developed via additional legislation (Public Acts 15-97, 16-92, and 17-3). SB 6517 provides further specification of the training and certification requirements to ensure that all teachers have a basic understanding of the specific needs of students with dyslexia. All teachers need to be familiar with evidence-based practices for reading instruction and the International Dyslexia Association's professional standards: Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading (2010).

In order to provide effective instructional services for all children, including those with reading disabilities and dyslexia, comprehensive teacher preparation for all teachers must use evidence-based curriculum regarding the literacy instruction for students with Dyslexia. Evidence based standards have been identified, and current teacher preparation practices must align with these current standards that have proven to be effective. HB 6517 provides frameworks, guidance, and accountability that is necessary to support the implementation of prior dyslexia legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill. This is my written testimony, and I will not be testifying at the hearing.

Respectfully submitted. February 28, 2021

Shelley Pelletier

Cutting, et al. (2013). Not All Reading Disabilities are Dyslexia: Distinct Neurobiology of Specific Comprehension Deficits. *Brain Connectivity*, 3, 199-213.

Moats, et al. (2010). *Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading*, International Dyslexia Association, Professional Standards and Practices Committee.

Shaywitz, S. (2005). *Overcoming Dyslexia*. New York: Vintage Books.